United Nations A/65/298

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 August 2010

Original: English

Sixty-fifth session
Item 20 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/236, provides an update on the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, together with actions taken by Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups in advancing the implementation of sustainable development goals and targets, including through partnerships for sustainable development. The report also covers progress of the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

* A/65/150.

** Late submission of the present report was due to the length of report and gathering of all the contributions from the United Nations system regarding the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The report is also feeding into the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which necessitated an unusually thorough review.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/236, in which the Assembly called for the effective implementation of the commitments, programmes and time-bound targets adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the fulfilment of the provisions relating to the means of implementation in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; reiterated that the Commission on Sustainable Development is the high-level body within the United Nations system for addressing sustainable development, especially the integration of actions across its three dimensions; and decided to organize in 2012 the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

2. The report provides an update on progress made on the issues raised in the resolution, with a special emphasis on the cluster of themes addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development. It also contains a report on the progress in preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

3. It should be read in conjunction with other reports submitted under the agenda item on sustainable development.

II. Overview

4. My 2009 report on this theme (A/64/275) had emphasized the broader and multidimensional nature of sustainable development, and that it should not be equated to only one of its constituent dimensions — the so-called three pillars of sustainable development, economic, social, and environmental. Rather, sustainable development is a way of transcending divisions and building bridges, not only between economic, social, and environmental agendas, but equally between developed and developing countries, between Governments, business and civil society, and between the present and future generations.

5. The earlier report had also sketched out the manner in which Governments have sought to put this complex idea into practice. In particular, what the major summits on sustainable development had tried to achieve was not to introduce a novel suite of policies but a novel approach to policymaking and planning, namely the integration of normative goals (economic, social, and environmental), supported by necessary institutional (both organizations and mechanisms to integrate relevant concerns into policymaking), informational (data collection, research, disclosure, and information-sharing), and international (finance, technology, and capacity-building) underpinnings. Finally, the 2009 report had also reviewed the impact of the recent series of crises as well as the innovative concepts that have emerged in response to the crises, especially such concepts as the green economy, the green new deal, and green growth.

6. The present report elaborates further on those issues, assessing progress made in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. It pays particular attention to the General Assembly's decision, in resolution 64/236, to convene the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, with the objective of securing "renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and addressing new and emerging challenges".

7. Several recent studies and policy documents have suggested that political commitment to sustainable development has waned since the high point of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in 1992. While most such observations simply assert this as a fact, some have gone farther and searched for empirical evidence or underlying reasons. The evidence cited most often is on the continued weakness or even decline of institutions charged with integrating relevant agendas, including their level of human and financial resources, legal mandates, quantum and predictability of fiscal allocations. Some mention is also made of the trend towards "re-fragmentation", that is, retreating from the goal of integration and restricting sustainable development to only the environment. Finally, some studies cite opinion polls on the level of priority attached to various issues, but these generally refer to the environment alone rather than to the more complex concept of sustainable development.

8. There are many explanations of why sustainable development has not been able to mobilize political commitment, but one theme is common to almost all of them, namely a perception of a lack of fit or a mismatch with existing arrangements and approaches. Two prominent examples of such a lack of fit correspond rather closely to the two themes selected by the General Assembly for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, namely "green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication", and "institutional framework for sustainable development" (resolution 64/236, para. 20 (a)).

9. The mismatch between sustainable development and the economic framework that informs the actions of finance ministries or budgetary decisions has been well studied, and many recommendations have been provided for bridging the gap. To cite one knowledgeable authority, Jonathan Porritt, former head of the Sustainable Development Commission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "You can't do sustainable development properly unless, first and foremost, you do sustainable economic development. The economics drives everything else. Perhaps it shouldn't be that way, but it is. Everything else falls into place, including the full repertoire of 'environmental protection measures', if a country's economy is being driven forward in a genuinely sustainable way". The intuitive appeal of the green economy owes much to this history.

10. Similarly, there are various references to what could be called an institutional mismatch. Expressed simply, sustainable development seeks to work horizontally across administrative departments, ministries and agencies, while traditional decision-making and political authority (control of budgets, number of employees, recognition of achievements) is organized vertically. The result is that while each of the subagendas may have a strong political constituency, there is no constituency for sustainable development. Any achievements go to the greater glory of the champions of the respective pillar, be it environmental or economic or social, but rarely to those of sustainable development. In turn, this can create a vicious cycle and discourage potential supporters and advocates.

11. A third type of mismatch mentioned in the literature is between the needs (especially in developing countries) and essential resources, financial as well as technical, which are mainly in developed countries. Sustainable development implies that all countries view development and poverty eradication as a common global agenda. Sustainable development requires a "development transition" (extending the benefits of modern science and technology to all inhabitants of the

planet), just as much as it needs a resource transition (decoupling human welfare from increased resource use) and the demographic transition.

12. The legacy of global summits on sustainable development is precisely to overcome these mismatches, and not only to bring countries and agendas together but also make "everything else fall into place" by identifying integrated economic policies, by enabling sustainable development to become effective without losing its aspirations for horizontal synergy to the temptation of vertical authority, and by seeking to ensure that global resources are channelled to where they are needed. This, in a nutshell, is the challenge that history has placed in the lap of the current generation; it is also the vision of what we hope the future generation will remember of Rio de Janeiro 2012.

13. Success in this endeavour would be measured not by the beauty of the political statement but by results on the ground, an upward convergence of living standards and a downward convergence of "ecological footprints". Rich countries need to find ways to maintain and enhance the well-being of their citizens through actions that ensure full employment, decent jobs, effective health systems, and expanding opportunities for innovation and creativity. Simple export of polluting and resource-intensive industries is no longer a realistic option. Poor countries still need to overcome poverty, hunger, disease, energy scarcity, and growing environmental stress, and economic growth will continue to be an unsubstitutable ingredient in this quest for the foreseeable future, but again, the conventional option of "grow first, clean up later" is no longer a realistic one.

14. The multiple threats that we have seen in recent years, including the threats to development agendas and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the emergence of planetary boundaries, highlight the urgency of renewed political commitment and decisive action to bring these dimensions together, to integrate environment, development, and society. These threats warn not only of reversals, but also of potential tipping points, critical thresholds and irreversibilities that undermine solidarity, reduce options, and replace hope with fear — regardless of whether the threats come from climate change, unsustainable technological choices, developmental despair, or from the loss of cultural and biological diversity.[1]

15. To rise to this challenge, the key sectors of world society must come to understand clearly and fully the interconnected nature and the gravity of the situation,[1] and lay the foundation for the new ways of thinking, acting and being that are needed urgently for shaping a future of peace, prosperity, freedom, equity, and sustainability. To that end, the present report is intended to provide a frank assessment of the (heretofore far too modest) progress in the implementation of sustainable development goals.

[1] J. Rockstrom and others, "A safe operating space for humanity", *Nature*, vol. 461, pp. 472-475 (September 2009); Paul Raskin and others, *Great Transition: The Promise and Lure of the Times Ahead*, Great Transition Initiative (Stockholm Environment Institute, Boston, United States of America, 2002).

III. The recent record

Poverty eradication and sustainable human development

16. It is fitting that the opening chapters of Agenda 21 address the questions of poverty eradication and population management. Development must be more than just the expansion of income and wealth. Its focus must be people.[2] A sustainable world cannot be imagined without at least three characteristics: it is a world without poverty, it is a world in which the population is not growing, and it is a world in which we do not increase the net pressure on natural resources.

17. However, the developments since the adoption of Agenda 21 have driven home at least one message clearly, forcefully, and with increasing intensity: time is not in infinite supply. The world does not have an infinite amount of time to achieve the intertwined goals set by Agenda 21. Time is not in infinite supply.

18. The Millennium Summit had recognized this challenge, and sought to speed up the eradication of poverty. Indeed, partly as a result, steady inroads have been made on this goal over the past decade, although the series of crises in 2008-2009 provided a serious setback.[3] Still, developing countries as a whole remain on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal poverty target by 2015.[4] Yet, it is sobering to be reminded that this will still leave nearly a billion persons under the international poverty line ($1.25 a day), and over 2 billion people under $2.00 a day.[3]

19. Furthermore, the global and regional poverty averages disguise large differences and deep inequalities. Since 2000, some 49 countries have attained the rate of poverty reduction needed to cut 1990 poverty rates by half and achieve the Millennium Development Goal target, 38 remain off track and are unlikely to reach the target, and there is insufficient data on 57 countries (22 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa) to assess progress.[5] The regions where poverty rates remain high are sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, while the sharpest reductions in poverty continue to be recorded in Eastern Asia. Measured at the $1.25-a-day poverty line, poverty rates there are expected to fall from 51 per cent in 1990 to 24 per cent in 2015, and the number of people living in extreme poverty will likely decrease by 188 million.

20. Going beyond income poverty, progress has been achieved in several areas, but significant blind spots continue to exist, such as reducing childhood undernutrition

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[2] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1990* (New York, UNDP, and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990).

[3] United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, New York, 2010.

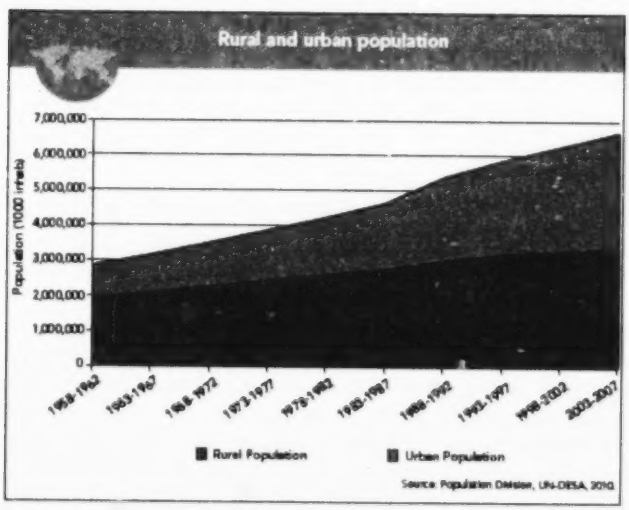
[4] Apart from those developing countries (see para. 19 below) for which there was insufficient survey data to measure progress since 1990.

[5] World Bank, World Development Indicators 2010 (Washington, D.C., 2010).

(with serious implications for future development), maternal mortality,[6] and enrolment of females in school (especially in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa).[7]

21. A second dimension of sustainable human development is access to services, which is also related to the level of urbanization. The world's urban population now exceeds the world's rural population (see figure I). Cities are an opportunity to use resources, including land, more efficiently while improving human well-being, but they also place pressures on urban governance and planning,[8] especially to protect the welfare of poor urban inhabitants. Although 22 million people in developing countries moved out of slums each year between 2000 and 2010, largely as the result of slum upgrading, the total volume of slum population has continued to increase, from 776.7 million in 2000 to some 827.6 million in 2010.[8] The pressures will only increase in the future, as 80 per cent of the net increases in urban population between 2009 and 2030 will be in developing countries.

Figure I
Rural and urban population, 1958-2007



Source: UN-Habitat, *The State of the World's Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010.

22. This also brings back the question of overall population growth. While projections of future population growth have steadily moved downwards, population is still growing, and most of the 2.3 billion people who will be added to the size of the global population will be in developing countries. Whereas the population of

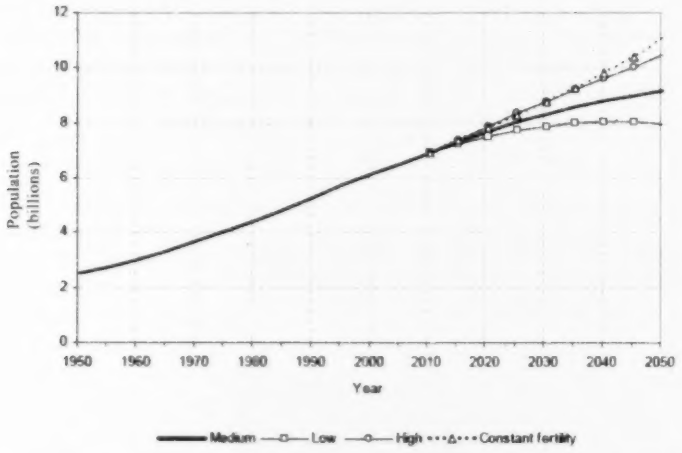
[6] Annually, 0.35 million to 0.5 million women die from pregnancy-related causes, almost all in developing countries and 15 million to 20 million suffer from maternal morbidity. See Women Deliver, "Focus on 5: women's health and the MDGs", available at http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2009/Focus-on-5.pdf.

[7] Ibid. Enrolment in primary education has risen to 89 per cent in the developing world. But the pace of progress is still not sufficient to ensure that all girls and boys complete a full course of primary schooling.

[8] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), *The State of the World's Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide* (UN-Habitat, 2010).

developing countries is projected to rise from 5.6 billion to 7.9 billion between 2009 and 2050, that of the more developed regions will change only minimally from 1.23 billion to 1.28 billion (including 130 million net migration from developing countries).[8]

Figure II
Population of the world, 1950-2050, according to different projections and variants

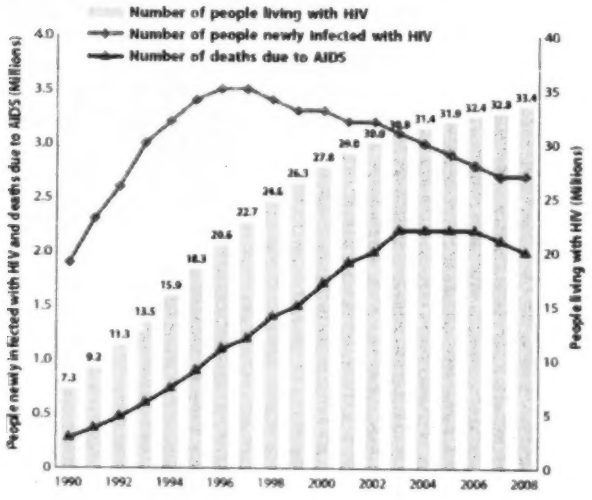


Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations, 2009).

23. A third dimension of sustainable human development is health. Again, some progress has taken place, in large part because of the Millennium Development Goals campaign, in the control of HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. Globally, the spread of HIV infection and number of deaths have peaked, in 1996 and 2004 respectively, although HIV still remains the world's leading infectious killer. By 2008, the number of new infections had declined from 3.5 million to 2.7 million, and AIDS-related mortality from 2.2 million to 2 million. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most heavily affected region, accounting for 72 per cent of all new HIV infections in 2008[3] (see figure III).

Figure III

Number of people living with HIV, number of people newly infected with HIV and number of AIDS deaths worldwide, 1990-2008



Source: *Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*.

24. Major increases in funding and attention to malaria have accelerated the delivery of critical interventions, but half of the world's population is still at risk of malaria, and an estimated 243 million cases led to 863,000 deaths in 2008, the vast majority (89 per cent) in Africa.[3]

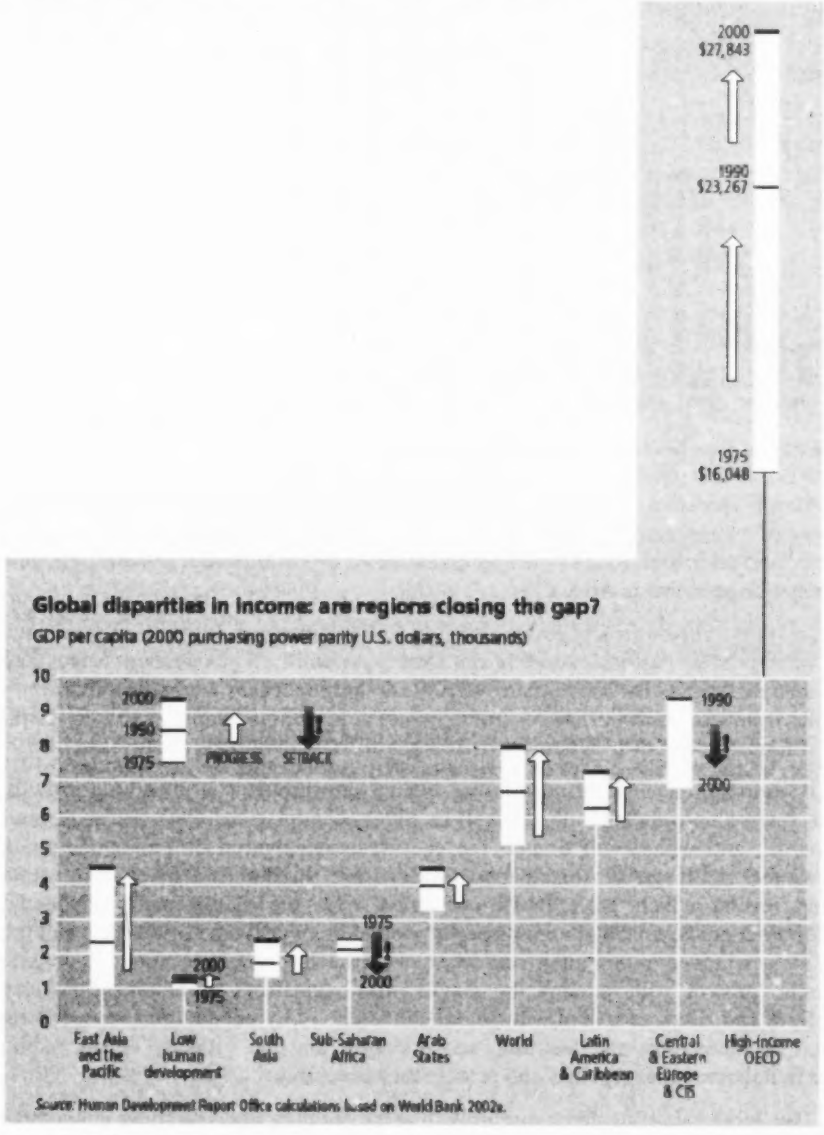
25. In 2008, tuberculosis prevalence fell to 11 million cases. Prevalence rates have been falling in all regions except in the Commonwealth of Independent States and sub-Saharan Africa. In 2007, there were 13.7 million cases globally, down only slightly from the 13.9 million in 2006, when 1.3 million people died.[5] In 2008, 1.8 million people, half of whom were living with HIV, died from the disease.[3]

26. A fourth dimension of sustainable human development is economic growth, whose impact on policymaking as well as other societal goals exceeds far beyond economics, and which will remain the central preoccupation of policymaking as well as the challenge of sustainable development. In the first place, per capita income levels, which are closely correlated with the achievement of human development goals, reveal a huge disparity around the world (see figure IV), and the gaps have widened rather than narrowed over the last three decades. Aggregate economic growth still remains the single most significant predictor of poverty reduction, and a key contributor to social solidarity — by encouraging cooperation as well as innovation and learning, and strengthening the capacity of the public sector to deliver social services and protect the vulnerable.

27. The acceleration of economic growth in developing and emerging economies since the mid-1990s, especially in several populous developing countries, has been a source of optimism. However, the series of shocks in 2008 and 2009 reversed the positive trends (see figure IV), and led to adverse impacts on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Also, it needs to be recognized that even the earlier

pattern is far from universal, and least developed countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, and landlocked countries and small island developing States have lagged behind other regions.

Figure IV
Global disparities in income: are regions closing the gap?

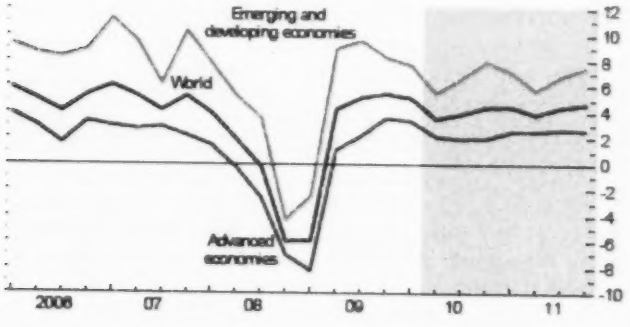


Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report* 2002: *Deepening democracy in a fragmented world* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002).

28. Still, the challenge remains a daunting one. Income levels of the poorest nations will need to increase twenty-fold and of the middle income nations five-fold to reach adequate levels of human development. Even at the very promising growth rates achieved in the previous two decades, this will take some time. And the warning from a broad range of respected natural and social scientists is that time is not in infinite supply, that human activities are already beginning to strain the fabric of nature, and that several planetary boundaries, including but not only climate change, are in danger of being crossed.[9]

29. The point is not whether these predictions are accurate; it is rather that they challenge policymakers to think of options in a world where the inevitability of growth can no longer be taken for granted. Clearly, they pose an extensive range of questions, including whether and how consumption levels at the higher end could be nudged down, not only to relieve the pressure on the environment but also to vacate a space for poor countries to achieve their developmental goals, whether such reductions could be done in a way as not to reduce the welfare of the rich as well as the poor in a globally intertwined world. This is a challenge from which we cannot turn our eyes, whether we are policymakers, planners, opinion leaders, visionaries, business executives, civil society activists, or political leaders. The time to achieve sustainable development may be running out on us. Time is not in infinite supply.

Figure V
Global growth of gross domestic product



Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Update, available at http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2010/update/02/index.htm.

[9] For example, see J. Rockstrom and others, 2009, footnote 1 above; and A. Simms, V. Johnson, and P. Chowla, *Growth Isn't Possible: Why we need a new economic direction* (NEF, 2010); Tim Jackson, *Prosperity Without Growth? The Transition to a Sustainable Economy* (United Kingdom, 2009); Peter Victor, *Managing Without Growth: Slower by Design, Not Disaster* (Edward Elgar, United Kingdom, 2008); James Gustave Speth, *The Bridge at the End of the World: Capitalism, the Environment and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2009); Bill McKibben, *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* (New York, Henry Holt, 2007).

Conservation and management of natural resources for development

30. The above-mentioned debate on growth has been triggered essentially by growing evidence of the unsustainable pressure being placed by human activities on natural resources. The Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen has dubbed the present era as the Anthropocene Age, in order to note that the entire world, including the natural world, is shaped decisively by human activities.

31. Over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history, largely to meet rapidly growing demands for food, fresh water, timber, fibre, and fuel. This has resulted in a substantial and largely irreversible loss in the diversity of life on Earth. Admittedly, some of these changes have contributed to substantial net gains in human well-being and economic development, but the balance is rapidly tilting in the opposite direction. The gains were achieved at the cost of the degradation of many ecosystem services, increased risks of non-linear changes, and indeed the exacerbation of poverty for some groups of people. Unless addressed, the benefits and even the possibility of survival of future generations will be seriously eroded. Already, there is a noticeable increase in the impact of natural disasters associated with or exacerbated by environmental degradation. Floods and droughts affect 270 million people and kill over 100,000 every year. Degraded and polluted ecosystems are a key contributory factor in the lack of access to safe water by over 900 million people. In some scenarios, the loss of ecosystem services is projected to result in a loss of up to a quarter of the world's food production by 2050, exacerbating hunger in many regions.[10]

32. While this is a challenge for the entire human species, it has particular importance for developing countries. In the first place, for many developing countries, natural resource management is still the single most important aspect of the lives, livelihoods, economies and strategies for survival. Poor and marginalized people are usually directly dependent upon environmental services, and the steady degradation of the natural resource base impacts their lives and livelihoods disproportionately. Secondly, developing countries have more limited financial, technological, and institutional resources to cope with the adverse impacts of environmental change. Thirdly, the emergence of planetary boundaries and its implications for economic growth, including growth in material use, poses a critical challenge to the current as well as future welfare of developing countries.

33. The Founex Report, released in 1971 by a high-level expert meeting in preparation for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, distinguished between different types of environmental challenges faced by developing countries, including those that are caused by underdevelopment (e.g., lack of access to clean water or sanitation), local environmental problems caused by the process of economic development (e.g., air pollution, land degradation), and global environmental problems. The Founex Report advocated a strategy that would accelerate the development process to ameliorate the first set of problems, and provide developing countries with the policy tools to address the

[10] United Nations Environment Programme, *Dead Planet, Living Planet: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration for Sustainable Development. A Rapid Response Assessment*, C. Nellemann, E. Corcoran (eds.) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.III.D.9).

second set. Finally, developing countries would need assistance to cover the additional costs of any actions needed to remedy the global environmental problems.

34. The Millennium Development Goals, in particular the targets for clean water and sanitation, can be viewed as an attempt to address the environmental problems of the first type. It is urgent to sustain the momentum in this regard and ensure that the relevant targets are achieved. At the other end of the spectrum, considerable international attention has focused on global environmental problems, including ozone-layer depletion, climate change, ocean acidification, loss of biodiversity, and deforestation. Some key issues in this regard are raised in section V on cross-cutting issues.

35. A number of strategies and tools have emerged to enable countries to address the second set of challenges, including those pertaining to air pollution, waste management, transport, mining, chemicals management, land use and others. As can be seen, some of these are identical to the current themes of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and will be covered in section IV.

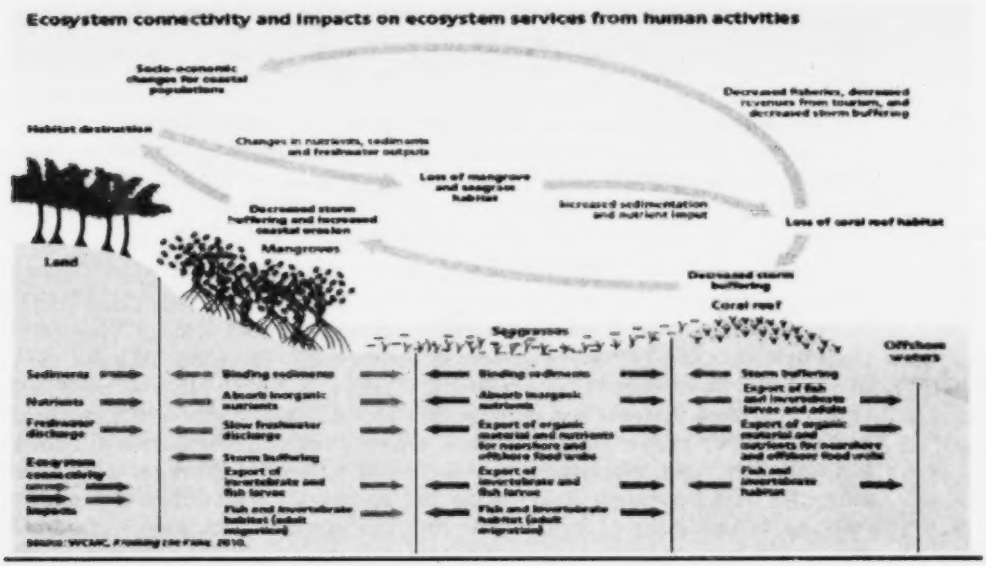
36. The urgency of ecological restoration of degraded ecosystems is getting increasing recognition as more and more systems suffer degradation. Some studies indicate that this is an economically viable investment. Well-planned, appropriate restoration, compared to loss of ecosystem services, may provide benefit/cost ratios of 3 to 75 on investment and internal rates of return of 7 to 79 per cent. Depending on the ecosystem restored and its economic context, many cases would constitute profitable public investments, in terms of economic values, jobs generated directly and indirectly, and improved environment and health.[10] Challenges of disaster mitigation and prevention from floods and storms are most effectively met by reducing deforestation of catchments, restoring wetlands, mangroves and coral reefs.[10] Similarly, water and wastewater management in rural areas can best be met by restoring ecosystem catchments, riparian zones and wetlands. Restoration of wetlands to help filter certain types of wastewater can be a highly viable solution to wastewater management challenges. Forested wetlands treat more wastewater per unit of energy and have a benefit/cost ratio of 6 to 22 times higher than that of traditional sand filtration in treatment plants.[10]

37. However, there are a number of challenges to enhancing biodiversity conservation and protecting ecosystem services. A major one is devising systems of incentives to reinforce conservation and sound stewardship. Benefit-sharing arrangements of natural resources can contribute by validating and protecting traditional and indigenous knowledge. The World Intellectual Property Organization Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore has established a database (http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/databases/contracts/index.html) that provides illustrative examples of the approaches actually taken when reaching mutually agreed terms concerning access and benefit-sharing. The Intergovernmental Committee has also worked on broad principles and draft materials on guidelines for intellectual property aspects of equitable benefit-sharing arrangements, in line with the encouragement of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

38. Still, effective conservation, including through designated protected areas, is the cheapest and most effective option. However, protected areas cover only 13 per cent, 6 per cent and 1 per cent of the planet's land, coastal and ocean area,

respectively. Of the remaining 80 to 90 per cent of the planet, almost one third of the world's ecosystems are already directly converted for human activities such as for agriculture and cities, and another one third have been degraded to some extent[10] (see Figure VI).

Figure VI
Ecosystem connectivity and impacts on ecosystem services from human activities



Source: UNEP, *Dead Planet, Living Planet — Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration for Sustainable Development. A Rapid Response Assessment*, 2010.

39. A direct implication of ecosystems degradation is food security, which depends on sound natural resource management. The Comprehensive Framework for Action on Food Security emphasized the two-track approach, namely to ameliorate immediate stress as well as promote longer-term measures leading to sustainable food production. The World Food Programme has put programmes in place to help to increase food security and protect livelihoods through activities in agriculture, natural resource management, water conservation and harvesting, forestry, infrastructure and capacity-building.

40. For sustainable food production to become a reality, concerted action is required from the farm level, to science and technology, and at the policy level. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in cooperation with a broad range of partners, is working to facilitate the adoption of sustainable crop production intensification policies globally through encouraging dialogue between the agriculture and environment sectors, and between the public, private and civil society sectors, and by harmonizing and further improving adaptation of existing international instruments, conventions, and treaties relevant to production intensification. The new strategic framework of FAO, adopted in 2009, includes Strategic Objective A on sustainable intensification of crop production, while in

2010 a strategy for sustainable crop production intensification through an ecosystem approach and an enabling environment was supported by member countries.

41. At the same time, the challenges of land degradation, erosion, overgrazing and loss of soil fertility, pollination and natural pest control can be met through more sustainable land use practices and restoration. Infestations of exotic species can, in many cases, be addressed by restoration, including by re-establishing more organic-based farming systems. Organic farming systems have been estimated to provide at least 25 per cent higher ecosystems services than conventional systems.

42. Air pollution is an enormous and growing challenge causing health problems, especially for the most vulnerable, as well as ozone depletion and climate change. In recent years, it has been increasingly recognized that air pollution and climate change are linked in several ways, and that they could be beneficially addressed by integrated policies yielding the co-benefits of improved local air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, the scientific understanding is still evolving of how changes in various pollutants in the atmosphere may contribute (positively or negatively) to global warming.

43. Turning to global environmental challenges, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Montreal Protocol programme has contributed to the phase-out of consumption and production of most ozone-depleting substances. Many such substances (e.g., the chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)) are potent greenhouse gases, and their phase-out has also significantly reduced carbon dioxide (CO_2) equivalent emissions released into the atmosphere, both directly, through the replacement of CFCs, and indirectly, through the energy savings gained through the adoption of newer, more energy-efficient technologies by industry. The total net climate impact of all of the UNIDO Montreal Protocol projects is estimated to be a reduction of around 359 million tons of CO_2 equivalent.

44. Climate change mitigation and carbon sequestration can partially be met through conservation and restoration of carbon sinks such as forests, more sustainable agriculture and marine ecosystems. The proposed Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) could lead to an estimated halving of deforestation rates by 2030, cutting emissions by 1.5-2.7 gigatons of CO_2 per year at a cost of $17.2 billion to $33 billion per year, which is dwarfed in comparison with estimated long-term benefits of $3.7 trillion in present value terms.[10]

45. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund has provided funding of approximately $2.7 billion for the climate change focal area since its inception.[11] GEF has mobilized voluntary contributions of $224 million for the Least Developed Countries Fund and has received $169 million of this money.[12] GEF has mobilized voluntary contributions of $147 million for the Special Climate Change Fund, of which $110 million has been received.[13] Additionally, as of June 2010, available resources in the Adaptation Fund Trust Fund amounted to $145 million. It approved four project concepts with a total proposed value of $21.8 million. Sales of certified emission reductions (CER) under the Clean Development Mechanism have generated revenues equivalent to $85.26 million since the start of the CER

[11] As of June 2009. Global Environment Facility Evaluation Office, *Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF: Progress Towards Impact OPS4, Executive Version* (GEF/A.4/4), March 2010.

[12] As of June 2010.

[13] As of February 2010.

monetization programme in May 2009. Estimates of potential resources for the Adaptation Fund from CER sales up to the end of 2012 range from approximately $297 million to $438 million.

IV. Themes in the current cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development

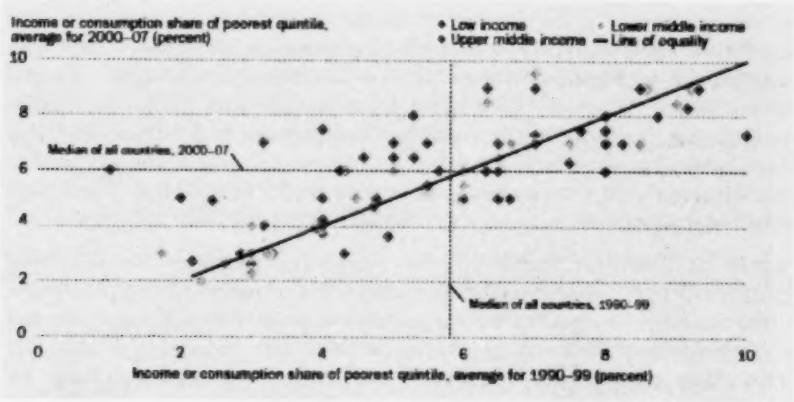
46. As mentioned, the current thematic cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development addresses many issues in local environmental damages. These include chemicals management, mining, transport, waste management, and sustainable consumption and production. The aim of the policy development until now is to provide countries with tools and resources to ensure that increases in human welfare do not come at the cost of long-term and irreversible damage to environmental resources.

Promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production

47. Sustainable consumption and production is about doing more and better with less: delivering more and better services to consumers (with the same or fewer goods) while using less material resources and putting less pressure on the environment and ecosystems. In short, it is about delinking economic and social well-being from resource use and pollution.

48. A fundamental challenge is that the aggregate growth of material consumption has been one of the most significant contributors to enhancing the consumption of the poorest. The poorest 20 per cent of the population accounts for just 6 per cent of total income or consumption. Since 1990 that share has increased most in low-income countries and has tended to shrink in upper-middle-income countries (see figure VII). In other words, it may be necessary, on the one hand, to identify ways for wealthy consumers to reduce their material footprint; it is also equally urgent to ensure that the necessary increase in consumption of the poor is delinked from this trend. To that end, there is a need for greater education and awareness, sound economic policies and incentives, sound planning and management, and sound design or redesign of production processes, sustainable patterns of resource use, with reduced material intensity, pollution and waste. Developed-country enterprises can chart the way forward, supporting their suppliers and partners around the world with technology and know-how.

Figure VII
Income or consumption share of poorest quintile, averages for 1990-1999 and 2000-2007



Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2010*.

49. The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), adopted in 2002 by the General Assembly, aims to promote sustainable skills and behaviour, inspired by creative and critical ways of thinking, in order to encourage the resolution and management of problems that stand in the way of sustainable development. A midterm review[14] of the Decade points to the need to reorient curricula and teaching materials towards more holistic, cross-disciplinary approaches, to reorient teaching methods from an emphasis on transfer of knowledge to more active cultivation of students as change agents in their communities, as well as the need to build capacities of teachers to employ these new teaching methods.

Developing a 10-year framework of programmes

50. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 called upon Member States and civil society to: "Encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production".[15] The theme of a 10-year framework of programmes is on the agenda of the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The broad objective is to support, broaden, scale up, synergize, and expand the activities that take us towards sustainable patterns of consumption and production.[16]

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[14] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014): Review of Contexts and Structures for Education for Sustainable Development 2009* (Paris, 2009).

[15] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex, Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"), para. 15.

[16] Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Review of implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation: a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns" (E/CN.17/2010/8).

51. In order to support the development of the framework of programmes, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNEP, with the collaboration of several Member States, and with the active involvement of major groups and other stakeholders, launched the Marrakech Process, a series of multi-stakeholder initiatives organized in the form of task forces, to identify examples of best practices, policies, analytical tools, institutions, partnerships, and projects, and thus develop and expand networks and communities of practice at the national, regional (e.g., African Round Table on Sustainable Consumption and Production, Latin American Regional Council on Sustainable Consumption and Production) and international levels. The themes of the seven task forces are: education, sustainable tourism, sustainable public procurement, sustainable products, sustainable buildings and construction, cooperation with Africa and sustainable lifestyles.

52. It would be important that a 10-year framework addresses the following sustainability challenges: institutionalizing sustainable consumption and production concerns into education systems as well as systems of local, national, corporate and international governance; identifying priority actions and initiatives at different levels; supporting peer-to-peer learning; mobilizing support for scaling up successful initiatives and programmes; encouraging economic and financial policies and public and private investments which promote sustainability; and providing an enabling environment for and supporting research, innovation and development in critical areas[16] with the same guiding objectives as in Johannesburg, namely ensure that the living standards of the poor are progressively raised even as consumption choices of the rich become less resource-intensive and environmentally damaging; decouple economic growth from environmental degradation in relative and wherever possible absolute terms, consistent with poverty eradication and universal human development; stimulate demand for and supply of sustainable products and services; promote more sustainable and low-carbon consumption choices and lifestyles; enhance social development through investment in people and communities, e.g., in a Global Green New Deal.[16]

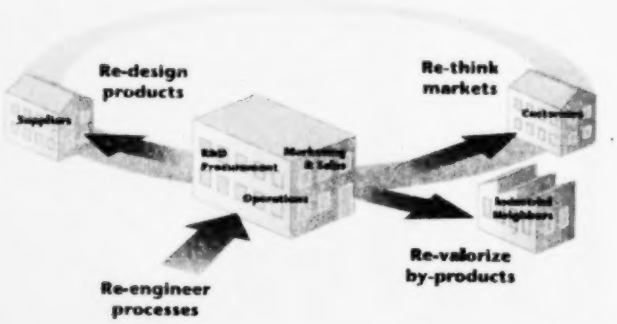
53. A 10-year framework of programmes could, at a minimum, provide a way of organizing and sharing knowledge and information and of continually updating the knowledge base with new lessons generated from experience on the ground. Beyond consolidating tools into ready-at-hand toolkits, the programme could also usefully provide a platform for training government policymakers and other stakeholders in the use of the relevant tools. The programme could help decision makers to select and apply the proper mix of programmes and policies to address obstacles and barriers specific to countries, sectors and segments of society. The programme could usefully provide a vehicle to help to match actions at all levels with technical support and financial resources.[16]

54. Among the initiatives that have contributed to the shift to sustainable patterns of consumption and production, mention must be made of eco-efficiency, corporate responsibility, sustainable procurement, and disclosure.

55. As defined by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, eco-efficiency is achieved by the delivery of competitively-priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality of life, while progressively reducing ecological impacts and resource intensity throughout the life cycle to a

level at least in line with the Earth's estimated carrying capacity.[17] Eco-efficiency has moved from being only concerned with resource savings or abating pollution to becoming a driver for innovation and competitiveness. Eco-efficiency can be encouraged through a choice of industrial policy, but companies can also take the initiative to re-engineer their processes (see figure VIII), in order to reduce resource consumption, pollution, and risk, as well as costs. They can revalorize their by-products by aiming for zero-waste targets, leading resource efficiency as well as cash benefit. Finally, they can redesign their products in order to meet the needs of their customers in a less material- and energy-intensive way.[17]

Figure VIII
Navigating eco-efficient opportunities



Source: World Business Council for Sustainable Development, *Eco-efficiency: creating more value with less impact*, 2000.

56. Sustainable procurement seeks to integrate requirements, specifications and criteria that are compatible with and favour protection of the environment and in some cases social progress.[18] Adoption of sustainable procurement policies by Governments and large organizations can help to stimulate demand, strengthen market conditions, and enable sustainable practices to overcome initial cost disadvantages.

57. The main instruments to promote sustainable procurement policies are raising awareness, supplying information and training (product criteria, manuals), developing codes of conduct and reporting initiatives (such as the Global Reporting Initiative and the Global Compact), and sharing knowledge and experience, for example, through the Global Ecolabelling Network. Activities include greening the specification of products and services; working with suppliers to reduce packaging and waste; buying from local suppliers to reduce carbon emissions and support local economies; ensuring that suppliers have good health and safety records; avoiding buying from suppliers that use child labour; ensuring suppliers have environmental

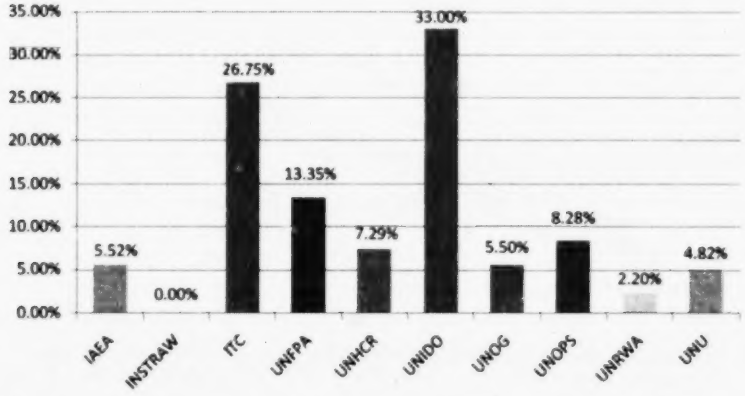
[17] World Business Council for Sustainable Development, *Eco-efficiency: creating more value with less impact* (New York, 2000).

[18] United Nations Global Marketplace website, http://ungm.org/SustainableProcurement/why.aspx.

management systems; buying from minority-owned businesses; and considering ethical issues in the supply chain.[19]

58. In the case of United Nations procurement, beginning with the 2008 Statistical Report on Procurement, sustainability reporting system has been introduced in order to show the degree of United Nations commitment to achieving climate neutrality and overall environmental sustainability. In this regard, all United Nations agencies are encouraged to use suppliers from the reporting organizations in the Global Compact initiative and procurement statistics on contracts of US$ 30,000 or more have been cross-referenced with the list of Global Compact participants[20] (see figure IX).

Figure IX
Percentage of expenditure with Global Compact suppliers



Source: 2008 Annual Statistical Report on United Nations Procurement.

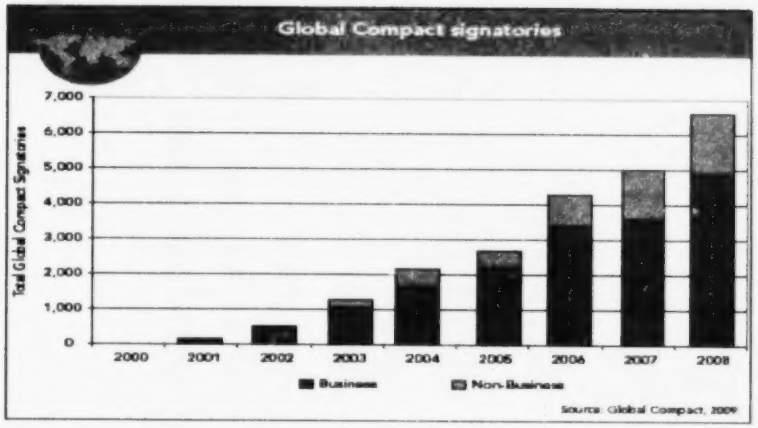
59. Corporate environmental and social responsibility has become a higher profile management concern in recent years in many countries. One indicator is the membership in the Global Compact, which exceeds 6,000, including 5,300 active business participants from more than 135 countries[21] (see figure X).

[19] United Nations Office for Project Services, *2008 Annual Statistical Report on United Nations Procurement, Sustainable Procurement Supplement* (New York, 2009).

[20] Environmentally and Socially Responsible Procurement Working Group, http://www.sustainableprocurement.net/home3.html.

[21] Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in Sustainable Development: Towards sustainable consumption and production* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 10.II.A.2).

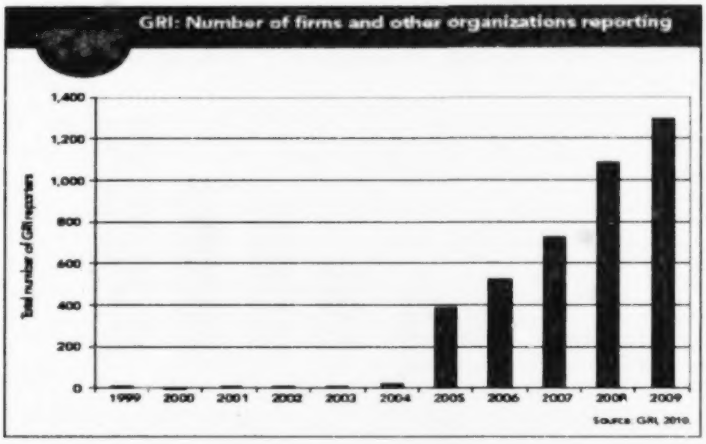
Figure X
Global Compact signatories



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in Sustainable Development: Towards sustainable consumption and production*, 2010.

60. Disclosure refers the provision of information on performance. A number of initiatives have sought to promote this, the foremost being the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Carbon Disclosure Project, and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). All these are voluntary initiatives that stress adherence to common principles of corporate conduct, including regular reporting, information disclosure, or international certification. The aim of GRI is to make disclosure of performances as commonplace and as important to organizational success as financial reporting. As of 2009, GRI counted over 1,200 organizations worldwide, many private corporations, that issued sustainability reports based on its GRI Sustainability Reporting (G3) Guidelines — an increase of 46 per cent over 2007[21] (see figure XI).

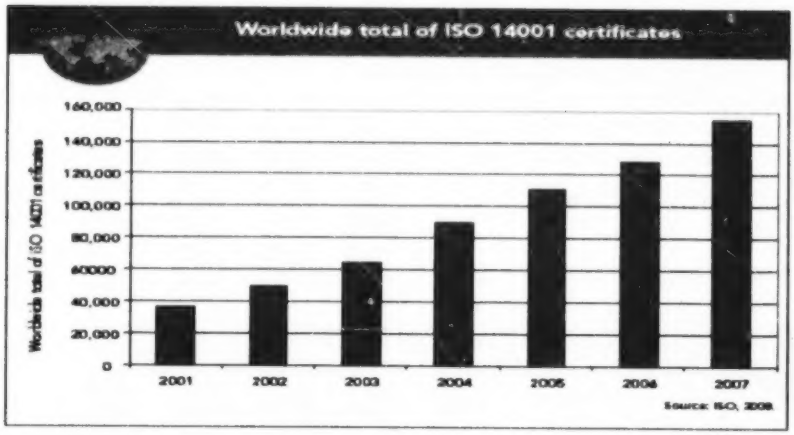
Figure XI
GRI: Number of firms and organizations reporting



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in Sustainable Development: Towards sustainable consumption and production*, 2010.

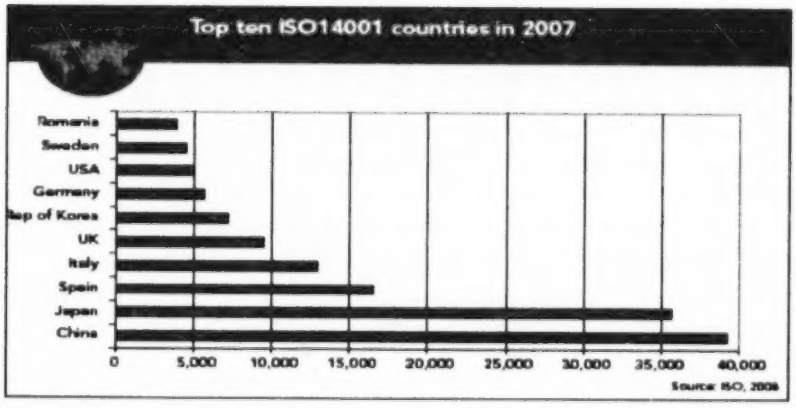
61. The International Organization for Standardization provides a widely recognized set of standards for products and processes, including the ISO 14000 series on the certification of corporate environmental management systems, and the newly launched ISO 26000 series on corporate social responsibility. These certifications signal potential customers or partners that a company meets certain standards, for example, with respect to internal controls on materials use, energy use, pollution and waste, and that it is committed to continuous improvement. The number of enterprises certified to ISO 14001 has been rising steadily, from under 40,000 in 2001 to almost 160,000 in 2007. It is a particularly well-utilized practice for exporters to obtain ISO 14001 certification as a means of informing consumers in their export markets of their environmental performance. This is one reason for the large weight of China and Japan in the total number of certificates issued[21] (see figures XII and XIII).

Figure XII
Worldwide total of ISO 14001 certificates



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in Sustainable Development: Towards sustainable consumption and production*, 2010.

Figure XIII
Top ten ISO 14001 countries in 2007



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in Sustainable Development: Towards sustainable consumption and production*, 2010.

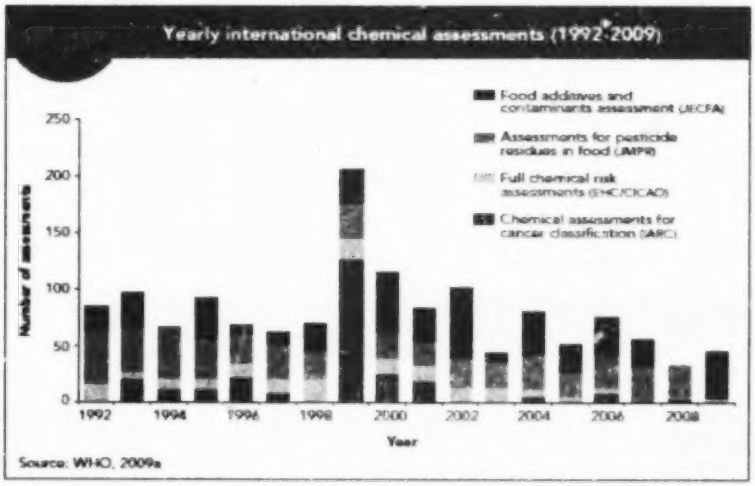
Environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals

62. For toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, solid wastes, sewage-related issues and radioactive wastes, emphasis has shifted from remedial measures to prevention. Still, much needs to be done in reduction at source, reuse, recycling and recovery.

63. Chemicals have played a significant role in fostering economic growth, improving standards of living and protecting public health. At the same time, if not managed soundly, they can pose significant dangers for the environment and society.

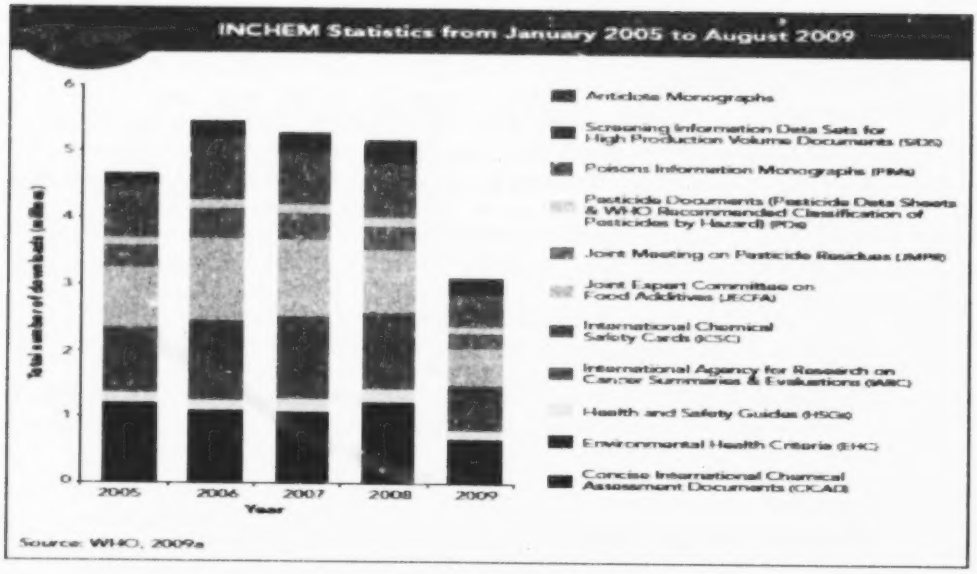
There are a number of different tools that provide ways for sound management of chemicals. Thus, chemicals assessments provide a consensus scientific description of the risks of chemical exposures, which are then published in assessment reports and other related documents so that Governments, international and national organizations and other stakeholders can use them as the basis for taking preventive actions against adverse health and environmental impacts (see figure XIV). The International Programme on Chemical Safety database INCHEM offers electronic access to thousands of searchable full-text documents on chemical risks and the sound management of chemicals, thus helping countries to fulfil their international obligations in this area (see figure XV).

Figure XIV
Yearly international chemical assessments (1992-2009)



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in Sustainable Development: Chemicals, mining, transport and waste management*, 2010.

Figure XV
INCHEM statistics from January 2005 to August 2009



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in Sustainable Development: Chemicals, mining, transport and waste management*, 2010.

64. The focus provided by Agenda 21 on the sound management of chemicals led to a number of developments which culminated in 2006 with the adoption of the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management and the formal establishment of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, which secures high-level political commitment to sound chemicals management as well as a dedicated source of funding for early actions to strengthen sound chemicals management, notably in developing countries.

65. The lack of adequate financial resources, including for the funding of activities concerning the remediation of contaminated sites, is still a major obstacle to integrate fully the objectives of sound management of chemicals into national budgets and development cooperation. The lack of prioritization of sound management of chemicals, which continues to be perceived principally as an environmental issue without regard to broader implications for sustainable development, is a continuing challenge.

Environmentally sound management of wastes, including solid wastes, sewage-related wastes, hazardous wastes, radioactive wastes

66. Besides negative impacts on health as well as increased pollution of air, land and water, ineffective and inefficient waste management results in greenhouse gas and toxic emissions, and the loss of precious materials and resources. An integrated waste management approach is a crucial part of international and national sustainable development strategies. In a life-cycle perspective, waste prevention and minimization generally have priority. The remaining solid and hazardous wastes need to be managed with effective and efficient measures, including improved

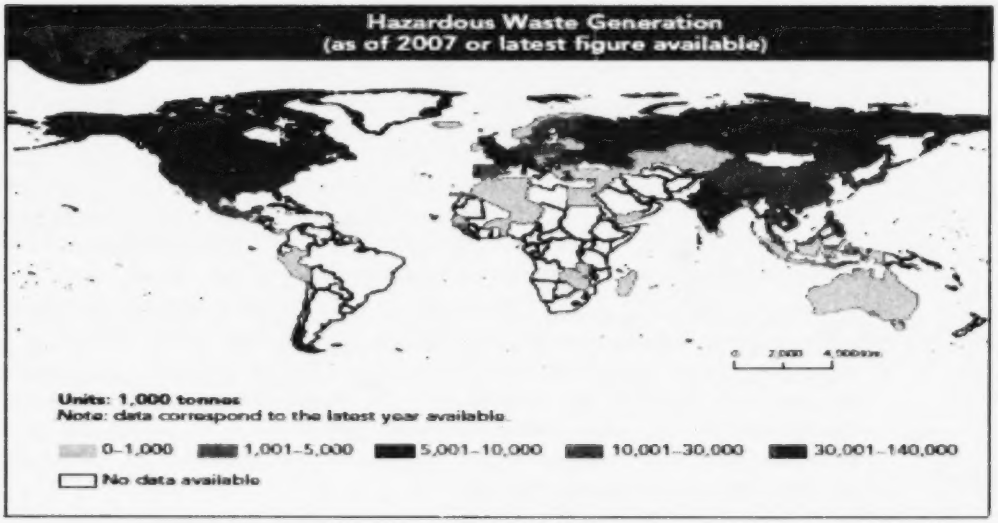
recovery, recycling and reuse of useful materials and energy. The 3R concept (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) encapsulates well this life-cycle approach to waste.[22]

67. While the responsibility to protect citizens from hazardous risks rests mainly on national Governments, transboundary and global dimensions of the issues require international response.

68. Thus, the establishment in 1989 of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, has significantly contributed to the protection of human health and the environment against the adverse effects of exposure to and improper disposal of hazardous and other waste. Together with the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Basel Convention provides a mechanism for preventing illegal or unwanted trade in pesticides and related toxic chemicals by creating legally binding obligations for the implementation of the prior informed consent procedure.

69. Figure XVI provides data on hazardous waste generation; the picture is incomplete however, because data are missing for most African, Latin American and Middle Eastern countries.

Figure XVI
Hazardous waste generation (as of 2007 or latest figure available)



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in Sustainable Development: Chemicals, mining, transport and waste management*, 2010.

70. E-waste and its proper management are emerging issues of concern to many countries. According to UNEP, some 20 million to 50 million metric tons of e-waste are generated worldwide every year. Other estimates expect computers, mobile telephones and television to contribute 5.5 million tons to the e-waste stream in

[22] Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in Sustainable Development: Chemicals, mining, transport and waste management* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 10.II.A.3).

2010, a figure which could rise to almost 10 million tons in 2015.[23] One of the most important legislative options available to both developed and developing countries to reduce the amount of e-waste is the adoption of extended producer responsibility, which makes manufacturers responsible for recovery and recycling or safe disposal of their products at the end of their useful lives.[22]

71. Solid waste, such as, for example, municipal and construction waste, represents also an increased risk to human health and environment, because rapid urbanization is increasing generation of solid waste in developing countries and developed countries are not substantially decreasing their waste, even though significant differences still exist.[22]

Sustainable transport

72. Transport and mobility are essential preconditions for sustainable development. While transport is often associated with environmental and social costs, the lack of adequate transport infrastructure and affordable transport services is contributing to poverty and posing major obstacles to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in developing countries.

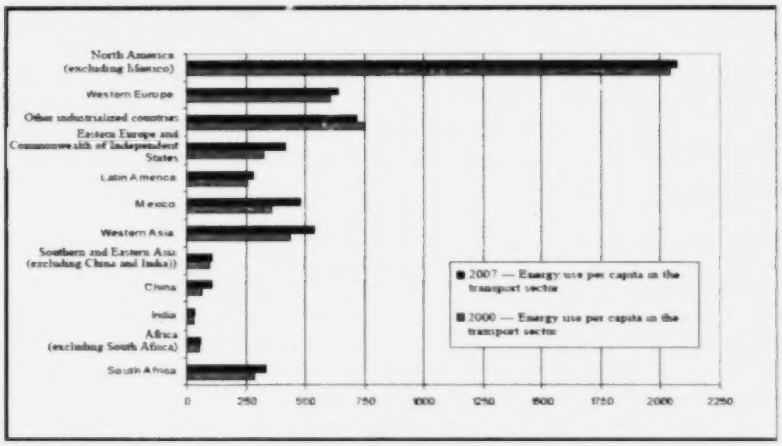
73. Globally, increased urbanization and motorization over the past several decades have resulted in a steep rise in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions, accelerating the process of climate change. Transport accounts for about 19 per cent of global energy use and 23 per cent of energy-related CO_2 emissions and these shares will likely rise in the future. Given current trends, transport energy use and CO_2 emissions are projected to increase by nearly 50 per cent by 2030 and more than 80 per cent by 2050.[24] The use of energy for transport in industrialized countries grew by an average of 1.2 per cent annually between 2000 and 2006, whereas in developing countries it increased on average by 4.3 per cent annually during the same period[25] (see figure XVII).

[23] See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/hazardous.htm. Based on the United Nations Statistics Division/UNEP Questionnaires on Environment Statistics (Waste section) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Eurostat Questionnaire on the State of the Environment (Waste section) as well as Eurostat environment statistics data website, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/environment/data/main_tables.

[24] International Energy Agency, *Transport, Energy and CO_2: Moving towards Sustainability*, 2009.

[25] International Energy Agency, World Energy Statistics and Balances, 2009.

Figure XVII
Energy use (kilotons of oil equivalent) per capita in the transport sector: 2000-2007



Source: International Energy Agency, World Energy Statistics and Balances, 2009.

74. Appropriate policy interventions are urgently needed to establish affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound transport systems. It is crucial that multimodal systems emphasizing low-carbon-based-energy modes of transport be developed and that increased reliance be put on public transport systems. Integrated urban and rural transport planning, as well as supportive fiscal and regulatory policies, paired with the development of new technologies and greater international cooperation, are key factors for achieving a transport sector that meets the requirements for sustainable development.

75. Since urban population is growing, especially in developing countries, many cities have embarked on, or are considering, the introduction of bus rapid transit systems, which are characterized mainly by larger buses that run on segregated lanes parallel to the local traffic. In comparison with light-rail transit or subway systems, bus rapid transit systems are much less costly while still achieving comparably high transport efficiency.

76. Bus rapid transit and other urban public transport systems offer many direct and indirect local, national and global benefits. Public transport infrastructure investments help to avert the emissions of significant amounts of GHG. Several initiatives, including the international Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport, and studies have been exploring the possibility of including bus rapid transit and other public transport projects in nationally appropriate mitigation actions in a future climate change agreement and emissions trading system. At its eighteenth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development considered transport as one of its themes and reviewed many good examples of bus rapid transit and other public transport systems.[26]

[26] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2010, Supplement No. 9* (E/2010/24), chap. II.

V. Cross-cutting themes

Institutions and governance

77. Agenda 21 sets out a detailed set of options for achieving transition to sustainable development. These include the establishment of appropriate institutions, mobilization of major groups and partnerships, and provision of international financial support, including for capacity-building and technology transfer.

78. Over the years, a number of institutions have been formally established to achieve convergence among economic, social and environmental goals. At the global level, the principal policymaking institution is the Commission on Sustainable Development. Among other contributions, the Commission has actively solicited the participation of major groups in policymaking and promoted a particular institutional form, multi-stakeholder partnerships, to implement sustainable development. Within the United Nations, the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs has played a role in enhancing system-wide coherence regarding economic and social goals. Besides this, UN-Water, UN-Energy and UN-Oceans have been established to promote system-wide coherence in the areas of their competence. At the regional level, the regional economic commissions have organized ministerial conferences and implementation meetings. At the national level, a number of institutional formats have emerged, including national sustainable development councils, the process for formulating national sustainable development strategies, and incorporation of sustainable development goals in other processes or institutions, including development plans, poverty reduction strategy papers and others. At local levels, local Agenda 21 processes were developed by local institutions and urban municipalities.

79. Each year, the General Assembly considers sustainable development as part of its development agenda. It considers a number of issues, from overall progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Mauritius Strategy of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the three Rio Conventions and UNEP, to sustainable mountain development and new and renewable sources of energy. Member States give direction to the Commission on Sustainable Development regarding its upcoming sessions. In 2009, the General Assembly decided to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in 2012, and accepted the generous offer of the Government of Brazil to host the Conference (resolution 64/236).

80. The Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2010, held in New York, discussed the theme of implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women, in its annual ministerial review during the high-level segment. There were many calls from senior representatives of Member States to strengthen sustainable development, and there was one suggestion to revive a proposal from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to create a United Nations

council for sustainable development to be responsible for economic, social and environmental affairs.[27]

81. The high-level segment has adopted a Ministerial Declaration reaffirming that gender equality, the empowerment of women, women's full enjoyment of human rights and the eradication of poverty are essential for development and underlining the importance of women as agents of development.

82. At its eighteenth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development discussed transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, and a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns. All those who have participated in the work of the Commission expressed their views in the above thematic cluster of issues, identified obstacles and constraints and presented a number of best practices and lessons learned.[26]

83. Prior to the eighteenth session of the Commission, five regional implementation meetings were held to discuss particular obstacles and constraints, best practices and lessons learned of each particular region.[28] The reports from those meetings were discussed at the session, including in the cross-regional interactive discussion, where participants highlighted the important interlinkages among the themes of the current cycle, and between the current and previous cycles, as well as their linkage to food security, climate change and the financial crisis. The large number of existing cross-regional partnerships and joint initiatives demonstrates the potential for cooperation, including the sharing of lessons learned. An important next step is to focus on joint initiatives, notably for replicating best practices, including replicable methodologies, and the creation of networks of experts.[28]

84. Four intersessional meetings also took place prior to the eighteenth session of the Commission, namely the International Consultative Meeting on Expanding Waste Management Services in Developing Countries; the International Expert Group Meeting: United Nations Forum on Climate Change Mitigation, Fuel Efficiency and Sustainable Urban Transport; the Workshop on Case Studies in the Sound Management of Chemicals; and the Inaugural Meeting of the Regional 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) Forum in Asia.[29]

85. The development of indicators of sustainable development is another important task as they are needed to assist decision makers at all levels to monitor progress towards sustainable development. The third, revised set of Commission on Sustainable Development indicators was finalized in 2006 by a group of experts from developing and developed countries and international organizations. The revised edition contains 96 indicators, including a subset of 50 core indicators.[30]

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[27] Statement by Dr. Paavo Väyrynen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development of Finland, available at http://www.formin.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=195991.

[28] See reports from regional implementation meetings at http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res_docucsd_18.shtml.

[29] See reports from intersessional meetings at http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd18_meetothe.shtml.

[30] Guidelines on indicators and their detailed methodology sheets can be accessed at http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_ind/ind_index.shtml.

Major groups

86. The eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development provided numerous opportunities for major groups to contribute case studies and best practices, provide data and information on projects in the field, identify challenges and obstacles to implementation, and engage in interactive dialogues with Government delegates and other participants, including with Ministers during the high-level segment. Substantive exchanges between representatives of major groups and Government officials continue to increase, and are well integrated throughout the official review session. Overall, more than 570 representatives from 135 organizations participated in the eighteenth session of the Commission. Major groups made a total of 153 interventions and their presence on Government delegations during Commission meetings is increasing.[31] Major groups also contributed substantively to the Partnerships Fair and the Learning Centre, and organized numerous side events and other related activities.

87. Several new and innovative mechanisms were established in 2010 by the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs that included major groups as key participants. One of them was a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Implementing Sustainable Development, held at United Nations Headquarters in order to ensure a more effective and coordinated implementation of the decisions made at the seventeenth session of the Commission; the other one was a Thematic Seminar Series.[32] The Seminar Series featured presentations by technical experts, video documentaries highlighting challenges and successes, and interactive discussions that were extended to an online format following the close of each seminar for wider participation on each of the themes.

88. Supporting major groups' participation in the Commission on Sustainable Development process continues to be a challenge, particularly as major groups from developing countries and countries with economies in transition are expected to increase their participation in the work of the Commission. Future success will depend on our collective ability to guide a sustained major groups' engagement and increase support for their means to self-organize, strategize and build capacity, which would amplify the number and diversity of major groups' voices that inform the Commission prior to and during its deliberations.

Partnerships

89. Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development have become an integral part of development in action and the most popular medium for the increasing involvement of non-traditional actors in the range of development initiatives advanced and supported by the United Nations system. Since the inauguration of the partnerships for sustainable development programme at the Johannesburg Summit, the Commission for Sustainable Development has continued to promote their development. Today there are more than 300 registered partnerships on the Partnerships for Sustainable Development website (http://www.un.org/

[31] Belgium, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden all included youth representatives on their delegations again this year, and many other delegations included representatives of the other eight major groups' sectors.

[32] All materials related to the Seminar Series can be found at http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd18_seminar_series.shtml.

esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm) and database (http://esa.un.org/dsd/partnerships/public/).

90. During the eighteenth session of the Commission, the Partnerships Fair showcased partnerships engaged in activities associated with the thematic cluster of 2010. The Fair provided a venue for registered Partnerships for Sustainable Development to highlight progress achieved, to share and learn from each other's experiences, to network with existing and potential partners, and to create synergies among partnerships. Significant, too, is the fact that a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Partnerships was convened for the first time in a plenary session of the Commission, during the eighteenth session. It was introduced as an innovation reflecting the increased emphasis being placed by the Commission on strengthening mechanisms that promote implementation and the realization of tangible results towards sustainable development.

91. It has become increasingly clear that there is need for a more effective framework for support, monitoring and oversight of multi-stakeholder partnerships within the Commission on Sustainable Development, ensuring the maintenance of focus on clear goals and on preserving the integrity of modalities of operation. Consideration is being given to strengthening the role of the secretariat of the Commission to serve as a more effective broker for the development and strengthening of partnerships.

Actions in international cooperation and means of implementation

92. The global economic crisis of 2008-2009 exposed systemic failures in the workings of financial markets and major deficiencies at the core of economic policymaking. While the strong desire for quick economic recovery is understandable, getting "back on track" would mean returning to an unsustainable path of global development. Sustained and widespread future prosperity will require major reforms in global economic governance and new thinking about global economic development with the need for a focus on sustainable development — entailing an approach that would balance material wealth improvements with protection of the natural environment and ensure social equity and justice — rather than a focus narrowly concentrated on economic growth and private wealth generation based on market incentives.

93. Global solutions will be required for global problems and, given the interdependence of these problems, policy responses will need to be highly coherent at various levels if the international community is to achieve the multiple objectives associated with fair and sustainable global development.

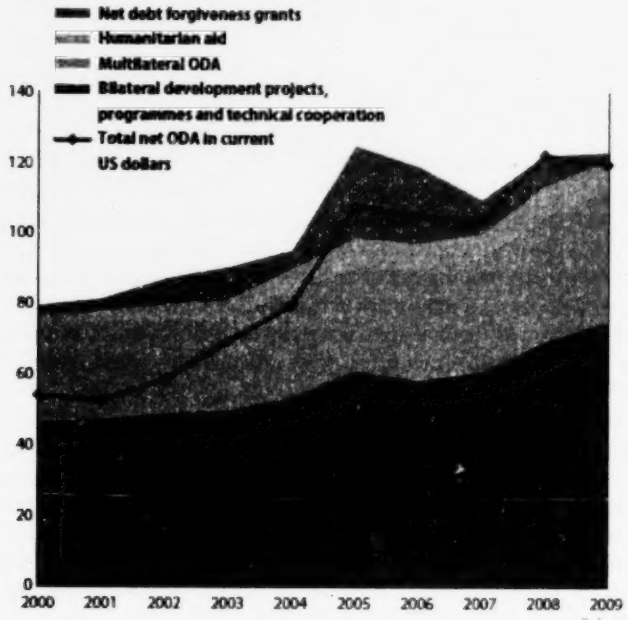
94. It is generally agreed that the development aid architecture is fragmented. Aid has become much more narrowly focused on poverty programmes and social sectors and has moved away from the initial purpose of supporting broader, transformative development processes. The shift has given rise to an enormous proliferation of aid agencies — governmental and non-governmental, multilateral and bilateral — which provide support and resources to developing countries for a multitude of specific-purpose aid projects.[33]

[33] *World Economic and Social Survey 2010: Retooling global development* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.II.C.1).

95. Figure XVII shows official development assistance (ODA) trends from 2000 to 2009 in current and constant (2008) United States dollars. In 2009, net disbursements of ODA amounted to $119.6 billion, or 0.31 per cent of the combined national income of developed countries (see figure XIX). In real terms, this is a slight increase (of 0.7 per cent) compared to 2008 even though, measured in current United States dollars, ODA fell by over 2 per cent — from $122.3 billion in 2008. If debt relief is excluded, the increase in ODA in real terms from 2008 to 2009 was 6.8 per cent. If humanitarian aid is also excluded, bilateral aid rose by 8.5 per cent in real terms, as donors continued to scale up their core development projects and programmes. Most of the increase was in new lending (20.6 per cent), but grants also rose (by 4.6 per cent, excluding debt relief).[3]

96. Aid remains well below the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for most donors. In 2009, the only countries to reach or exceed the target were Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The largest donors by volume in 2009 were the United States, followed by France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan[3] (see figure XIX). While the majority of the initial commitments remain in force, some large donors have reduced or postponed the pledges they made for 2010.

Figure XVIII
Official development assistance from developed countries, 2000-2009
(Constant 2008 United States dollars and current United States dollars)



Source: *Millennium Development Goals Report 2010.*

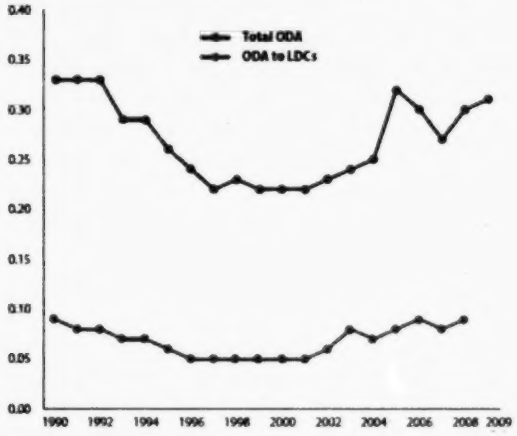
97. At the national level, the increasing role of foreign direct investment (FDI) and global value chains in driving world production, trade and technology development has limited the scope for the wielding of industrial policies by national

Governments; and multilateral trading rules have imposed restrictions on domestic support measures for developing export industries. Further, freely flowing private capital has made macroeconomic stabilization much more challenging. Rules for intellectual property rights and quality standards have increased the cost for many developing countries of absorbing new technologies and becoming globally competitive. This does not mean that there is no policy space at all, but rather that the narrowed scope is posing much greater challenges to policymakers today.[33]

Figure XIX

Net official development assistance from OECD-Development Assistance Committee countries as a proportion of donors' gross national income, 1990-2009

(Percentage)



Source: *Millennium Development Goals Report 2010.*

98. The impasse over the Doha Round, launched in 2001 and aiming for more development-oriented multilateral trading rules, reflects the difficulty of striking a proper balance between a desired common set of rules of the game and the principle of accommodating different capacities among countries to engage competitively in trade. And even though there has been some progress in providing developing countries, especially the least developed countries, with greater duty- and quota-free access to developed-country markets for their products through the application of most-favoured-nation treatment, important barriers to market access persist for developing countries. Also, agricultural subsidies in advanced countries remain high and continue to limit production and income opportunities for farmers in developing countries. The proportion of developed countries imports (excluding arms and oil) from all developing countries admitted free of duty reached almost 80 per cent in 2008 — up from 54 per cent in 1998. For the least developed countries, this proportion increased only marginally from 78 per cent in 1998 to almost 81 per cent in 2008[33] (see figure XX).

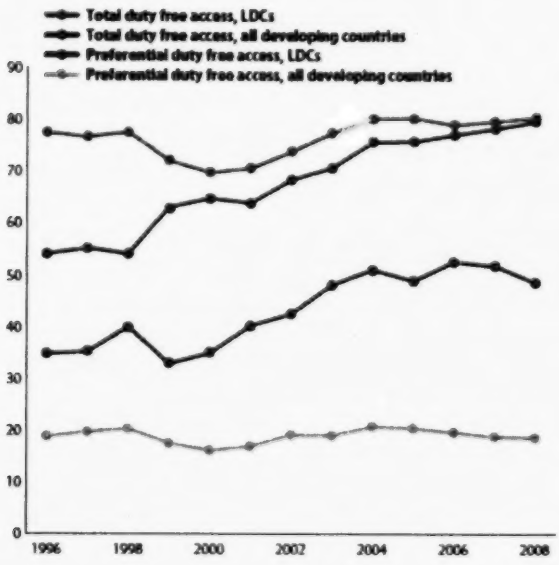
99. Countries that have been successfully integrated into world trade over the past half century all went through stages of trade protection and support to domestic production sectors before opening themselves up to world markets. Present multilateral trade rules leave limited space for newcomers that wish to follow in

their footsteps. While further progress needs to be made in enhancing world market access for developing countries and reducing agricultural support measures in developed countries, multilateral rules will need to be recalibrated in order to increase the space available to developing countries for building production and trading capacity. One key action will be to revisit the current rules limiting the use of subsidies for export promotion. Developing countries should be given more space for applying these subsidies as part of their broader development strategies. A second key action is to expand significantly the Aid for Trade initiative. Resource allocation under Aid for Trade would need to be fully aligned with national development strategies.[33]

Figure XX

Proportion of preferential developed country imports from developing countries and least developed countries while their competitors' products were subject to a tariff under most favoured nation (preferential duty-free access), 1996-2008

(Percentage)



Source: *Millennium Development Goals Report 2010.*

100. A key issue is the question of coherence between trade and climate policies, including resolution of potential conflicts between multilateral trading rules and multilateral environmental agreements, keeping in mind the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibilities underlying the multilateral climate accords.[33]

101. Current economic and environmental difficulties offer an opportunity for global collective rethinking of the development and business models used over the last century, and to shift to a new model that would help to put the world on a climate-friendly and sustainable economic path. One innovative response is the promotion of a "green economy", or "green growth". This implies both a combination of public policies aimed at reorienting both public and private investment towards the development and widespread deployment of environmentally sound technologies,

including low- or zero-carbon technologies. Strategic investment in the infrastructure (power, transport, etc.) to support the transition to a green economy will be critical. A number of countries are already prioritizing green investment and developing strategies and policies to support it, while researchers are developing the conceptual and empirical support for such policies.

102. Need for affordable access to new and existing environmentally sound technologies is growing apace with the climate threat. As early as 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment had included explicit language emphasizing the importance of technology transfer for the achievement of environmental and developmental goals. Ever since then, transfer of technology and knowledge-sharing have been an essential part of discussions on how to achieve sustainable development and address global sustainable development challenges.

103. At the same time, developing countries will need support in building their own technological capacity so as to ensure that they both undergo a smooth transition to a low-emissions economy and maintain competitiveness in an open global economy. In devising technology capacity-building plans, more focus could be given to the demands of users, improved aid coordination and donor collaboration, capacity-building investments on regional and global levels, and a greater role for information technology in capacity-building.

VI. Progress of the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

104. On behalf of the United Nations system, the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in his capacity as the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, will lead the secretariat of the preparatory process. In his functions, he will be supported by two executive coordinators, one from the North and the other from the South, and a dedicated secretariat established within the Department.

105. The secretariat work is organized at three levels. (a) an office of the Secretary-General of the Conference to oversee overall preparations and provide strategic guidance to the preparatory process; (b) a Department of Economic and Social Affairs task force consisting of senior managers that advises the Secretary-General of the Conference on various normative and technical aspects; and (c) core secretariat functions which are grouped under the following five clusters within the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs: intergovernmental work; preparation of technical documentation; outreach and communication; national- and regional-level preparations; and logistical aspects.

106. System-wide coordination in support of the preparatory process will be pursued through the Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs,[34] supported by the United Nations Development Group[35] and Environmental Management Group.[36]

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[34] See Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs website http://www.un.org/en/development/other/ecesa.shtml.

[35] See United Nations Development Group website http://www.undg.org/.

[36] See Environmental Management Group website http://www.ewg.org/.

107. In order to steer the preparatory process of the Conference, as stipulated by General Assembly resolution 64/236, a Bureau was elected at the first session of the Preparatory Committee, held from 17 to 19 May 2010 in New York. The Bureau consists of two members from each region, plus Brazil being ex-officio, thus making it an 11-member Bureau. Antigua and Barbuda and the Republic of Korea have been elected as Co-Chairs, with the following Vice-Chairs: Argentina, Botswana, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Italy, Pakistan and the United States of America.

108. The first session of the Preparatory Committee took up both substantive and procedural matters. Discussions on substantive issues essentially focused around the objective and thematic areas as defined in the General Assembly resolution, notably green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and institutional framework for sustainable development. On the procedural side, participants met in contact groups to consider how to organize their work in the lead-up to 2012, and discussed the rules of procedure of the Conference.[37]

109. To advance the preparatory process, the first session of the Preparatory Committee requested the secretariat to prepare: (a) a report on progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development, as well as an analysis of the themes of the Conference; and (b) a synthesis report on best practices and lessons learned on the objective and themes of the Conference. In addition, it was decided to organize open-ended informal intersessional meetings for a total duration of not more than six days within existing resources.[38]

110. A questionnaire has already been sent to the Member States, the United Nations system and major groups to collect the information necessary for preparing the above-mentioned reports, which will be discussed during the second session of the Preparatory Committee scheduled to take place on 7 and 8 March 2011.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

111. Implementation of sustainable development principles, goals and policies is continuing at all levels, but the multiple crises have heightened perceptions in policymaking circles and the general public of possible trade-offs among the pillars of sustainable development. This only serves to reinforce the importance of taking an integrated and holistic approach, based on an understanding of the interlinkages and synergies among economic, social and environmental goals. Broad participation in implementation by all stakeholders is also needed, and a practical focus on specific sectors, problems and solutions should be developed.

112. To that end, it is recommended that the General Assembly:

(a) **Call upon Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups to deepen their commitments to sustainable development by**

[37] *Report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, First session (17-19 May 2010)* (A/CONF.216/PC/5).

[38] The intersessional meetings should be organized as follows: one two-day meeting between the release of the synthesis report and the Second Preparatory Committee meeting, and two two-day meetings between the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee, the final intersessional meeting taking place no later than eight weeks prior to the third session of the Preparatory Committee.

redoubling their efforts to implement Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, in particular by expediting progress in implementation through exchanging lessons learned and best practices as well as strengthening technology cooperation;

(b) Call upon Governments to continue providing their support to the Commission on Sustainable Development and to organize intersessional activities, taking into account the thematic cluster of issues considered by the Commission in 2010-2011, and to emphasize the importance of a consensus outcome containing practical, action-oriented decisions supported by means of implementation during the upcoming policy session;

(c) Call upon Governments to continue providing their support to the Commission on Sustainable Development and, in that regard, to contribute to the Commission's trust fund in support of enhanced participation of representatives of developing countries and representatives of major groups in the work of the Commission;

(d) Invite the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to continue monitoring, through its High-Level Committee on Programmes, the operational efficiency and effectiveness of inter-agency collaborative mechanisms, including UN-Energy, UN-Water, UN-Oceans and other collaborative arrangements;

(e) Invite donor Governments and international financial institutions to target funding to developing countries in support of their efforts to overcome barriers and constraints identified during the review year in the thematic cluster of issues of transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns;

(f) Invite all relevant stakeholders, including organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and major groups involved in the area of sustainable development, to continue full and effective participation at all levels and to continue providing ideas and proposals reflecting their experiences and lessons learned as a contribution to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;

(g) Call upon the Secretariat and relevant United Nations system agencies, in consultation with the Bureau, for the purpose of having focused substantive discussions to advance the subject matter of the Conference, to organize within existing resources open-ended informal intersessional meetings for a total duration of not more than six days, including a two-day meeting between the release of the synthesis report requested above and the second session of the Preparatory Committee, and two two-day meetings between the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committees, the final intersessional meeting taking place no later than eight weeks prior to the third session of the Preparatory Committee;

(h) Call upon Governments, the relevant United Nations system organizations, including the three Rio Conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements, and invite international financial institutions, regional development banks and other international and regional organizations

to contribute to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development by providing technical contributions and inputs, as appropriate, to the report of the Secretary-General on the objective and themes of the Conference;

(i) Request the secretariat to seek information, inputs and contributions including through a questionnaire addressed to Member States, the United Nations system, international financial institutions, major groups and other stakeholders, on their experiences including success factors, challenges and risks with respect to the objective and themes of the Conference and further request the secretariat, with the guidance of the Bureau, to prepare a synthesis of the information and contributions collected in this way;

(j) Invite the governing bodies of relevant United Nations system organizations to transmit to the preparatory process for the Conference, as appropriate, outcomes emanating from their meetings relevant to the objective and themes of the Conference;

(k) Call upon regional commissions to organize in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders preparatory regional meetings for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and invite, in this regard, international and bilateral donors and other countries in a position to do so to support these meetings through voluntary contributions;

(l) Call upon all relevant stakeholders, including organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and major groups involved in the area of sustainable development to participate in and support the intersessional meetings of the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;

(m) Encourage international and bilateral donors and other countries in a position to do so to support the preparations for the Conference through voluntary contributions to the Commission's trust fund and to support the participation of representatives of developing countries, and invite voluntary contributions to support the participation of major groups of developing countries in the regional and international preparatory processes and the Conference itself.